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THE TIMES.



VOL. II.

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# THE TIMES,

*A NOVEL.*

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.


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## THE TIMES.

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As it would be impossible even for the most emphatic language to give a just description of the consternation, grief and dismay, produced by the knowledge of Mrs. Villars's flight, we shall pass over in silence the immediate consequences of this most dreadful, this fatal event. When suspense was changed into certainty, and Mr. Villars could no longer doubt the infidelity of his wife, or the perfidy, of his friend, he sunk into a state of the most con-

summate despair : it was a grief which reason could not control, nor sympathy mitigate. Sometimes a sudden phrensy would succeed to this silent despondency ; but in whatever way the feelings of his mind were exprest, it was evident that those feelings were of the most poignant nature.

Two days and nights of bitter anguish elapsed without his yielding to the entreaties of friends to take the necessary means for the preservation of health. On the morning of the third day, his eldest daughter was for the first time brought into his presence : he caught her hastily in his arms, kissed her fervently, then, bursting into a passionate flood of tears, darted out of the room. Soon after this affecting circumstance had occurred, a servant brought in some letters, one of which was addressed

dressed to Mrs. Villars, and was as follows:—

“On taking up my pen to acquaint my dearest sister with my arrival here in safety, I wish to divest myself as much as possible of that sorrow and regret with which I have of late been but too familiar. In communicating the above intelligence, I know I communicate happiness also; and how greatly will this happiness be increased by that re-union with the dear friends, the prospect of which is so delightful, so reviving to my weakened spirits and harassed mind! Forgive me, my Sophia, if I confess that even this delicious hope is insufficient to *banish* grief;—*soften* it I am sure it will. But when I tell you that there *have* been moments since we parted whose bitterness was such as to make life appear a va-

lueless possession, unless by its continuance I could serve the glorious cause we had espoused, you will not wonder at this.

“The honour of England and the salvation of Spain were objects so dear to my heart, that, in the hour of enthusiastic and almost uncontrollable ardour, the claims of nature and affection were nearly subdued; but you know me too well not to be assured that this estrangement was merely temporary: as an obstructed stream on regaining its usual course flows more abundantly, so the tide of affection, which now runs rapidly to my heart, seems to have gained new strength from having been restricted. If, therefore, I cannot wholly conquer my dejection, you must not suppose that a deficiency of happiness implies a deficiency of love; nor that I am  
not

not fully sensible of all those consolations, which connexions so dear as such as I am blest with have it in their power to bestow.

“ You must consider, my sister, that sorrow such as I have felt, and so recently felt, springs from no common, no trivial cause. You must forgive me, too, if for a few moments I dwell on subjects which I cannot nor ought not to forget. To cherish the memory of those I revered and loved, is a duty I owe to my country, to my general, to my friend : I have a mournful pleasure in recurring to scenes which called forth all that could elevate and ennoble, as well as afflict the human mind. I saw in our lamented commander the triumph of as brave a spirit as ever British soldier was graced with. The cause in which he fell, he supported  
with

with all the energy which its sacred rights could inspire in the most noble and magnanimous breast : he knew how to appreciate as well as defend the liberty he both loved and respected, against the encroachments of a lawless and insulting tyrant. England has to deplore the loss of one of her brightest ornaments; Spain, a most able and valiant champion; and the British army a brave and active leader. When I reflect on the worth and abilities of this excellent man, I have an honest pride in recollecting, that he who is gone disdained not to approve my conduct; yes, dear Sophia, the gallant Moore was my friend as well as my commander.

“The shock which this ever-to-be-lamented event produced on my mind, was preceded by one of a similar, though less public nature. On the intrepid,

trepid, disinterested, and humane conduct of Captain Beavor, one opinion only prevailed among those who had it in their power candidly to judge of it. To me werereserved,almostexclusively, opportunities of discovering those lesser traits which give additional value to the exalted virtues already ascribed to this admirable young man. I was bound to him by the ties of gratitude as well as of affection: his cheerfulness supported and his kindness consoled me under every difficulty. His equanimity and fortitude afforded me a constant lesson, whilst his affectionate attention procured me some indulgencies which he said my less robust constitution and inexperience of fatigue rendered absolutely necessary. Nine days ago he fought by my side; with a courage which nothing could subdue, he rushed  
on

on the furious foe ; I saw his strength fail him ; I regarded him more attentively, and perceived the blood flowing in streams from his breast. Instantly I caught him in my arms, and bore him from the scene of desolation : but all aid was ineffectual, death was in his face. Whilst I was endeavouring to bind up the fatal wound, he conjured me not to let my grief for his death interfere with my duty. His last words, which he uttered with difficulty and many interruptions, were these : ‘ Trust me, Lionel, you can in no way show so laudably your friendship for me, and respect for my memory, as in endeavouring to avenge on our enemies private losses as well as public injuries. I hope, whilst I have been solicitous to perform the duty of a soldier, I have not wholly neglected that of a Christian.

tian.



tian. God grant you may return to that country which I must never more see, crowned with honour and victory! Should Heaven grant you a favour so distinguished, when you think of those whom the chance of war obliged you to leave behind, remember *they* also had their share of glory. Could I be assured that the enemy of England and of Spain would be vanquished, I should die not only resigned, but—' in pronouncing these words, his voice failed him, and, uttering a deep sigh, he continued for some time silent: again, however, he revived, and, desiring me to take from his neck a picture, added in a voice still fainter, as near as I can remember, the following words: 'I know you will not think it too much trouble to restore this yourself to my Eliza, should it ever be in your power:

it will be a satisfaction to her to know that my last moments were not disturbed by the triumphs of an insulting foe, nor even witnessed by an indifferent spectator : to my friendship for you she is no stranger : tell her that, as I was denied the felicity of living *with* her, and, as far as was consistent with my profession, *for* her, I had only one wish ; to die as a soldier ought : conjure her not to grieve immoderately that this wish is accomplished :’ again he paused. I tried to speak as I knelt by his side, and supported his dying head ; but the power of utterance was denied me. He pressed my hand : ‘ Lionel,’ said he, ‘ these scenes are but ill calculated for a mind so young and so affectionate. I detain you too from your duty ; yet I cannot bid you leave me ; but the moment I am gone, think only  
of

of being a soldier.' He then gave me some directions respecting two orphan sisters, whose circumstances I fear are not affluent, and requested I would keep his watch as a token of his friendship. 'Now,' continued the expiring youth, 'I have settled all my worldly concerns; God, in his mercy, grant me peace in heaven!'

"These were the last words of my departed friend. His loss I deeply lament, though I rejoice that he was spared those sufferings which subsequent occurrences must have excited. The lady whose picture he wore, and to whom he had been engaged for some years, is the daughter of an officer who died abroad; she lives with her mother in the neighbourhood of London. The Miss Beavors reside at Guilford with an aunt, who, though in circumstances somewhat

somewhat limited, has given her nieces a very liberal education. I am sure I am not mistaken when I please myself with the expectation of your paying that attention to these surviving friends of Captain Beavor, which I need not say will to me be so highly gratifying.

“And now, my dear Sophia, I must add a few words respecting my own affairs, and then conclude this long letter. I cannot as yet speak with certainty as to the time of my being in town: as yet, I have but little hope of going into Cumberland. I shall write to my father this evening; and as an answer from London will sooner arrive than one from Harwood, I shall be obliged to Mr. Villars to remit me fifty pounds. As it is possible I may see you in the course of a few days, I wish to remind you, that anxiety, grief,  
and

and hardship, *must* have produced effects that will be visible in my appearance for some time to come. I have no honourable scars to vouch for my hostile engagements, but I rejoice that my looks do not announce the having enjoyed ease and plenty. Those who know how soon my chameleon-like countenance and varying figure conform to the 'usage of the times,' would certainly suppose that I had shrunk from those usages, were I to return with the same glow of health in my face, and the same appearance of personal strength, as when I left England. You must not therefore feel any painful emotions on this subject, but consider that, whilst numbers were perishing around me, I have been spared. I shall soon write again. With every kind remembrance to you and yours, believe me, my dearest sister,

sister, most truly and affectionately  
yours,

“LIONEL HARWOOD.”

“*Plymouth, Jan. 28, 1809.*”

“P. S. Direct for me at the post-office in this place.”

Many were the attempts made by Mr. Villars to get through this heart-piercing letter before he could accomplish his purpose. Having at last gone over the whole, he gave way to a torrent of grief which nothing could alleviate. When again the violence of his emotion gave way to silence and despondency; on the following day he ordered his travelling chariot to be got ready, and, without suffering any one to attend him, was soon on the road to Exmouth.

The meeting which took place between

tween this unhappy man and his friends there, we shall not attempt to describe ; but we are fearful there are many who can feelingly participate in an affliction too exquisite for description, too bitter to be exprest.

On the day after Mr. Villars's arrival in Devonshire, Miss Reynolds earnestly requested permission to go immediately to town for the dear children, to whom she had resolved to supply the place of a mother. Her petition was readily granted. When Miss Reynolds arrived at the end of her journey, which was about noon, she instantly went into the nursery, and found the sweet unconscious innocents in a profound sleep. Having dismissed the servant, she indulged the sorrow which this interesting sight awakened afresh in her affectionate bosom : then calming her feelings,

ings, she knelt by the side of the dear infants, when with clasped hands, and eyes raised to Heaven, she uttered in a low voice the following ejaculation : “ Gracious God ! if consistent with thy divine will, oh ! give me the power and inclination to perform to these injured children all the duties of a mother : may no circumstance, no event ever interfere with what I wish to cherish, as I would cherish all that is dear to peace and virtue ! And oh ! merciful Father ! look down with an eye of pity on their wretched, their —— ” here her voice was rendered inarticulate by sobs ; but her looks expressed what her heart dictated.

Having made this solemn dedication of the powers she was blessed with to the children she already tenderly loved, Miss Reynolds arose from her supplicating



cating posture with more satisfaction than she had felt since the afflicting circumstance of her friend's misconduct came to her knowledge. She gave the necessary orders for leaving London at an early hour in the morning, and arrived with her precious charge at Exmouth sooner than her anxious friends had reason to expect her return.

In a few days after her journey, as she was walking one fine morning near the sea with little Catharine, she saw three ladies at a short distance before her; and, on their turning, was very agreeably surprised to find that one of them was Mrs. Howard, who, after the first expressions of joy were over on this unexpected meeting, introduced to Miss Reynolds her two daughters: then taking Catharine by the hand, she  
asked

asked to whom belonged that sweet little girl. Miss Reynolds blushed extremely ; was for some moments silent ; then turning pale she hesitatingly replied, “ It is the daughter of—of my friend ——.” “ I comprehend you, my dear Miss Reynolds,” said Mrs. Howard with an air of kindness and compassion ; “ I am sorry I have given you pain by alluding to a deceased friend, for such I am persuaded was the mother of this charming little girl.” Miss Reynolds was silent : she tried to restrain the tears which glistened in her eyes, and they walked slowly on until they reached Mrs. Howard’s lodgings.

Miss Reynolds promised to call upon her the next morning, and after mutual assurances of continued friendship they parted. Miss Reynolds did not much regret the Doctor’s not being at Exmouth ;

Exmouth ; as she thought it doubtful what construction he might put upon her letter, and the little inclination she showed to become one of his correspondents.

We shall now say a few words respecting Lionel Harwood, and then advert to his unhappy sister. This interesting young man had but too much cause to say with an admired poet, "Woes cluster ; rare are solitary woes." Having dispatched his letters to his father and sister, he accompanied Major B—— on some military business which they had orders to transact. Soon after they returned to the hotel, the former took up a paper, and amongst various other articles read the following passage : " On Tuesday last the Honourable Mrs. V——s eloped from the house of a lady of high rank, with  
L—

L— R—— V—e. The company were numerous and brilliant; and it is said that this much admired but most unfortunate woman was induced to engage in very deep play; and having been unsuccessful during the whole of the evening, it is conjectured that she was led into the commission of this fatal error, more from the dread of encountering the displeasure of her husband from having disregarded his injunctions, than from any dishonourable attachment to the young nobleman with whom she has absconded.

L— R—— was for many years the favourite friend of Mr. V——s, and since his marriage had been a constant visitor at that gentleman's house, without having incurred the smallest suspicion of harbouring designs so inimical to the peace and honour of its master.

master. The general opinion is, that this irreparable injury was caused more by the events which immediately preceded the elopement, than by any other circumstance. The lady who has brought this indelible disgrace upon families highly respectable, has left two charming infant daughters, of whom she always appeared most extremely fond; nor did those who were in habits of intimacy with Mr. and Mrs. V——s entertain the smallest doubt but that a mutual and sincere affection subsisted between them. But whatever may have been the particulars which have led to the commission of this dreadful but prevalent crime, the misery of which it has been productive is but too faithfully ascertained.”

The Major passed on to some other paragraph without commenting on what  
he

he had just read ; when happening to cast his eyes upon his friend, he beheld him pale as ashes, and motionless as a statue. Astonished at what he saw, and imputing this sudden change to some violent seizure that denoted extreme illness, he rang the bell for harts-horn and water ; and thinking that bleeding might be necessary, he dispatched a messenger for medical assistance. But he soon found that the disease originated in mental suffering : by degrees, he drew from the unhappy youth a confession of the truth ; and though the Major was willing to allay his fears by representing the little reliance which is frequently to be placed on newspaper intelligence, he could not but apprehend that in the present instance there was too much reason to fear the information was not wholly unfounded.

founded. As the names were not mentioned at their full length, there was certainly a possibility of their being misapplied; yet certain particulars, which Mr. Harwood in the anguish of his mind had alluded to, almost destroyed this hope.

After passing a wretched night, this most unhappy young man endeavoured to obtain leave of absence for an earlier time than had before been mentioned. But in this he did not succeed: and had his request been granted, what were the consequences likely to result from it? An interview with friends whom he dreaded to see.

The more he meditated on this agonizing subject, the more was his heart torn in pieces with the bitterness of grief. Yet the thought of what his sister *was*, would sometimes create a  
hope

hope that he was afflicting himself without a cause : he conceived it was impossible that his beloved, his admired Sophia, whom from her earliest infancy he had regarded with the fondest affection, could be thus lost, thus degraded. In a transport of indignant and unrestrained passion he rejected the thought ; when again conviction flashed upon his tortured imagination, and again he sank into all the horrors of despair. In this fluctuating and distressed state of mind, he was rejoined by Major B ——, who, though unwillingly, was obliged to leave him for a short time. The appearance of this gentleman denoted no good tidings ; to protract a state of suspense that must terminate in total disappointment, is to protract misery. Painful as it was to Major B —— to confirm the impression which he saw his  
appearance



appearance had instantly made, he thought it advisable to do so. All that friendship could suggest was performed by this benevolent man. But in so incurable an evil, how powerless is friendship! In vain did Major B—— endeavour to assuage the storm which raged without control in the mind of young Harwood. No hope of unmerited calumny or erroneous communication now existed: he grasped his sword; he called on Heaven for justice; and in the most solemn terms declared that nothing should avert his vengeance from the wretch whose baseness exceeded all conception. It was impossible, he said, that his sister could voluntarily leave her happy home;—compulsion or some vile stratagem *must* have been practised. He raged, he trembled, he wept; then, throwing himself into a chair quite ex-

hausted, listened in silence to the assurances of his friend, who entered into all his views, applauded his sentiments, and palliated the misconduct of his fallen but still dear sister, by dwelling on the infamy of her betrayer.

When the character and disposition of Mrs. Villars are impartially considered, it will not be supposed that she could long remain in the state of degradation into which she had unhappily plunged herself, without evincing a wish to return to the path of virtue from which she had so unhappily swerved. Never did a more penitent offender supplicate the mercy of Heaven. That she could never return to that path without shame and dismay is too melancholy but incontrovertible a truth.

When the first paroxysms of grief and remorse had subsided, and her mind  
was

was in a state to reflect more calmly, though not less acutely, on the prodigious depth of misery and infamy into which she was precipitated, she began to consider what course she was to pursue. To quit as soon as it was possible the situation she was in, was her fixt and unalterable resolution. Nor was it long before she determined on her plan. About seven miles from Harwood Park lived an elderly person who had for many years been servant to Mrs. Harwood: her inoffensive character and useful qualities had greatly endeared her to the family, by whom she had so long been considered as a most valuable domestic. About six years before the marriage of Mrs. Villars, she came into the possession of a house and small piece of ground that was

left her by a relation ; and as soon as the event already mentioned had taken place, she retired to the habitation which she hoped would afford her a comfortable retreat during the rest of her life. This person it was to whom the wretched Mrs. Villars was determined to apply. Her resolution was no sooner formed, than she addressed to her the following letter :

*To Mrs. Seddon.*

Probably before you receive this letter, the sad circumstance which relates to the unhappy writer may have reached your knowledge. Oh ! my respected friend ! I know that you love virtue and detest vice : how then can I, who am a wretched victim to the latter, obtrude myself on you who are so good ?

good? But Heaven itself, which is all perfection, despises not the sincere penitent:—may I then hope that *you* will regard with an eye of pity her who is humbled to the dust, and whose sense of shame and guilt sinks her below the meanest of those who are free from the depravity of vice? Think not that with any other sentiments than those of sincere contrition I would presume to trespass on your clemency, and entreat you to afford an asylum to one who has so justly forfeited all claim to your esteem. It is on your pity and compassion alone that my hopes are placed. There *was* a time when, because Providence had appointed me a station in life that was more elevated than yours, you treated me with deference and respect. This distinction was little more than imaginary:—But,  
how

how vast is the distance, in a moral view, at which we are now placed ! You cannot despise me more than I despise myself.—But still I wander from the point : though I condemn with severity, my censures are general. How can I relate the shocking event ? how can you imagine the dreadful truth ? But when I tell you that I am a wretched outcast from society ;—that I am for ever exiled from my family, and from those who were once my friends ;—that I have dissolved the ties which I once thought could have yielded only to death, and have forfeited all claim to what constitutes the dearest enjoyments of life,—can any inference but one be drawn from such a list of accumulated evils ? No ; there is only *one* crime which *can* bring with it consequences so direful, so irreparable. This crime  
you

you must impute to her who, on her knees, implores your pity.

SOPHIA.

Having dispatched this letter, its wretched author prepared every thing that was necessary for her intended journey, which she proposed commencing on the following morning ; and at an early hour put her resolution in practice.

Soon after the departure of Mrs. Villars, Lord Robert, in order to relieve his mind from some part of the burthen which oppressed it, sat down to write to his father, whom he addressed in the following terms :

“ In what words shall I supplicate the forgiveness of a parent whose counsel I have disregarded, and whose peace I have destroyed ? Think not, my most  
revered

revered but most injured father, that I have the presumption to solicit your pardon, under any circumstances but those of the most sincere contrition, and perfect sense of the atrocity of my offence. I have not the temerity to attempt exculpating myself in any degree for the commission of a crime which is in itself so heinous, except that I wish to assure you it was entirely unpremeditated. In the eye of the world I shall be considered as a base deliberate traitor, undermining the affections of the woman on whose love and fidelity depended the happiness as well as the honour of the man for whom I avowed the most perfect friendship. To this general censure I submit: but I could not bear that you should view my conduct in a light that would class me with wretches who are  
a disgrace



a disgrace to human nature, and a curse to society.

“Unhappily or the woman whom I have irreparably injured, and for the numerous friends who are deeply involved in this affliction and disgrace, the consequences of this dreadful event are not less fatal because it was not premeditated. All the consolation I can derive from assuring you of this circumstance, is that of hoping that you will think of me with less horror. Your most severe censure and just indignation, I own, I deserve I have taken an advantage which accident gave me over the woman, who, of all others, I admired and esteemed :—that I really loved her, I am now convinced ; but my passion was so tempered with respect, that it was not only concealed

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from

from *her*, but in some measure from *myself*.

“The distress in which I saw her on the fatal evening when she allowed me to place her in my carriage, so occupied my whole soul, that every thought but that of dissipating her fears seemed banished from my mind. It is true, this might have been accomplished, and her virtue and reputation still have been saved. But the hurry of passion silenced every better principle: the smothered spark like lightning darted through my frame; and as the overwhelming torrent resists every obstacle that would oppose its progress, so this newly enkindled but perhaps long dormant and unacknowledged passion subdued every effort that reason and conscience might have suggested  
to

to suppress it. The unhappy victim of this fatal delirium with which I was seized, left me yesterday ; nor did I attempt to detain her. When the distraction of her mind subsided into that sort of calmness which resembles despair, she fixed on what course to pursue. As soon as I had reason to think she had determined how to dispose of herself, I urged her to inform me how I could best assist in promoting the plan she had adopted. This question produced what had long been denied her,—a plentiful shower of tears ; but she gave me no answer. All I have been able to obtain from her, is a promise not to do any thing intentionally that is likely to injure her health ; and that she will allow the young person, who left my sister Charlotte some weeks since on account of indisposition,

tion, to accompany her. What no bribe could effect, the irresistible sweetness and exquisite distress of Mrs. Villars have accomplished. From the motives of pure benevolence and compassion, this kind-hearted young woman has complied with my earnest request ; and I think I am too well acquainted with the disposition of my sister, to fear that this humane conduct will meet with her disapprobation. Should Lady Charlotte decline taking her again into her service, I shall have been the cause of a cruel disappointment. If my sister will indulge me with a few lines to do away this fear, I shall think myself highly indebted to her.

“As soon as you can bear the presence of a son who has so justly incurred your displeasure, it is my wish to throw myself at your feet, and by every mark  
of

of attention to your future happiness, and by contrition for my past conduct, make all the reparation in my power for the pain and regret I have occasioned you. Trust me, my lord, the hope of again being restored to your favour, and the society of my family, is what can alone afford me the least glimpse of consolation.

“When I look round on the accumulated misery I have been the cause of, how does the importance which I lately attached to rank and affluence sink into insignificance! How gladly would I barter all for an unblemished conscience! This one action of my life will embitter every future prospect: as the injury can never be repaired, the impression it has made on my mind can never be effaced. Though to reflect

flect is to be miserable, yet it is my determined resolution to seclude myself from all society until you consent to the only wish I can now form ;—that of being again admitted to your presence. It is only this hope which can in the smallest degree fill up the comfortless blank which my future life presents : yet, believe me, my lord, it is not for myself that I feel so acutely : though I sincerely deplore my misconduct, the sharpest pang I feel is for the incurable sorrow in which I have involved the only woman I *could* have loved, had fate allowed me to indulge a preference that seemed to comprise in itself a world of felicity. But it is past :—should my unhappy life be protracted, it shall be my care to atone in some small degree for the irreparable injury

I have

I have occasioned, by future acts of beneficence and kindness : indigent merit shall not want a friend, whilst I have the power to lessen the calamity by which it is depressed. You who know the energy of my mind, and considered me superior to the commission of a crime which only *bordered* on the one I have perpetrated, can form some conception of what I must endure. I know you will pity me. Should your clemency induce you to go still further, and add forgiveness to pity, you will not find an ungrateful son in the unhappy

“R. VERE.”

The same day on which this letter was written, Lord Robert received a note ; the superscription of which presented a female hand-writing to which  
he



he was an entire stranger. The contents were as follows:—

My Lord,

As I am certain your lordship feels much anxiety for the lady you ordered me to attend, I take the liberty of addressing a few lines to you, to say, that she preserves more seeming composure than I expected; nor has she entirely refused refreshment, though what she has taken has been very trifling, and of the most simple kind. She seldom speaks, except to urge my return, and to thank me for the attention I endeavour to pay her: but the manner in which she treats me goes to my very heart; for any one would suppose that she considered me as a lady, and herself as a servant. God grant she may be happy in the next world! in this I am  
sure



sure she never will again. When we stopped at the inn where I write this; a young woman came to the door with a charming child in her arms that appeared to be about six months old. The moment the lady saw it, she started as if seized with some sudden pain, and I thought she would have fainted. It is not proper that I should trouble you, my lord, with my observations; yet I can't forbear saying, that I would freely undergo all I have lately suffered, and more, could I restore to this sweet young lady her lost peace of mind.

Our next stage to-morrow is to be Northampton, but where we are to go after that I am yet a stranger. With much difficulty I have prevailed upon her to consent to let me attend her until she arrives within two stages of the place where she means to stop, which,

which, she says, is at the house of a kind but humble friend. I remain, with due respect,

Your lordship's obedient servant,

LUCY SUMMERS.

*Newport, Feb. 3, 1809.*

It was in consequence of much entreaty being used, that Mrs. Villars suffered this young person to attend her on her melancholy journey. She not only, however, became reconciled to the thoughts of possessing so soothing a companion, but was thankful for the services which rendered her situation less forlorn, and prevented any conjectures that might have arisen from so young a person travelling entirely alone. They were attended by the son of a tenant, who had orders to wait for them some miles distant from the place where their journey

ney

ney commenced, and who was an entire stranger to Mrs. Villars and the circumstances which related to her unhappy story. In order to render her appearance as little conspicuous as possible, this lady had procured a black sarsnet gown, with a pelisse and close bonnet of dark cloth : over the latter she wore a black laced veil, which she very seldom removed during her journey. The further she approached northward, the more liable she considered herself to meet with persons by whom she was not utterly unknown.

As the habitation of Mrs. Seddon was several miles distant from the nearest post-town, and as the conveyance of letters depended on casual circumstances, the one which Mrs. Villars had written previous to her journey remained in the office when she terminated

nated her melancholy journey, and arrived at the end of the narrow road which led to the humble but peaceful abode of Mrs. Seddon.

It had been the custom of this good woman, since her removal from Mr. Harwood's family, always to have two of the elder girls from the school appropriated by Mr. Harwood and his daughter to the use of poor children. It was her delight to instruct young persons in whatever would contribute to their becoming good Christians, and prepare them for filling properly the stations they were likely to occupy in life. Her instructions, she hoped, would not be forgotten, when they were removed to situations more advantageous and beneficial. These children were alternately to act as companion and servant to their benefactress,  
each

each taking their week of appropriate employments. By this means they obtained some knowledge of domestic concerns, and their acquirements in reading and working were regularly attended to ; nor was their writing neglected, as an exact account was kept of all expenditures, and various letters written to distant friends ; an employment which was now become irksome to Mrs. Seddon on account of her increasing infirmities. But although her health was precarious and her strength greatly impaired, the faculties of her mind retained all their usual vigour. The extreme benevolence and exemplary piety which marked her character and influenced her conduct through life, had gained her the respect and affection of all those who had had an opportunity of observing these excellent

lent qualities ; nor had she neglected to acquire much useful knowledge whilst a resident in Mr. Harwood's family.

On the evening of Mrs. Villars's arrival, Sally Pearce was reading to her mistress. The latter happening to look up, saw a lady walking slowly towards the house, and a carriage standing at some distance. Sally, in a tone of great surprise, pronounced the name of Mrs. Villars, and hastened to open the door with a countenance which bespoke her ignorant of the cause of this visit. The joy which Mrs. Seddon felt on hearing Sally announce the arrival of one so dear to her, was soon changed into feelings of a very different nature. The pale and dejected appearance of the beloved young lady, whose looks had hitherto been expressive of the highest degree of health and vivacity,

city, shocked her so much, that she had scarcely the power of bidding her welcome. Mrs. Villars eagerly, though faintly, inquired whether she was not expected. On being answered in the negative, the task which was before her quite overcame her spirits, and she sunk into a chair silent and sorrowful, her whole manner indicating the most consummate despair.

Whilst Sally was gone to bring her small trunk from the chaise, she folded her arms about the neck of her friend, at the same time saying, “ You shall know all in time : at present I will only tell you that I am come to implore your protection, pity, and forgiveness.... Could I be assured you would not cast me from you, it would perhaps —” here a violent burst of tears became a seasonable relief.

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The distress and astonishment into which the good Mrs. Seddon was thrown had almost deprived her of the power of utterance ; nor was she capable of forming any distinct idea of what probable event could possibly give rise to this mysterious and alarming visit. Her first conjecture was, that the intellects of Mrs. Villars were disturbed : but admitting this to be the case, that she should be suffered to travel in a hired chaise and alone seemed totally inexplicable. Mrs. Seddon, however, said nothing which bordered on inquiry ; but in the most soothing terms assured her disconsolate visitor, that she should never want a home whilst it was in her power to afford her one ; nor ever be destitute of a friend, whilst Providence granted her the ability of performing the duties belonging



longing to so sacred an office. Some tea being prepared, Mrs. Villars partook of the refreshment ; after which she gladly embraced the offer of retiring to the neat little chamber which was made ready for her : she hoped, when alone, she should be better enabled to acquire the fortitude she so much wanted, in order to go through the trying scene which awaited her. When she considered how she was once looked up to, as the patroness and guide of those who must shortly regard her with horror, if not with contempt, she shrunk from the thought of making this fatal disclosure. But, as she was convinced of the enormity of her crime, she was convinced also that her humiliation ought to be deep in proportion to her guilt.

On the following morning she ap-  
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peared in the parlour with a countenance expressive of the deepest dejection ; yet there was something in her manner that bespoke a more collected mind than she seemed to possess on the preceding evening. Still was Mrs. Seddon doubtful whether to think a derangement of intellect was in any measure the cause of the sad change she witnessed. After inquiring with much tender concern respecting the health of her guest, Mrs. Seddon ventured to ask whether she had come immediately from Harwood Park. This was a question for which Mrs. Villars was not prepared : the words seemed to vibrate through her whole frame ; an universal trembling seized her, and the power of respiration was almost suspended. Whilst Sally was administering some hartshorn, a letter was  
brought

brought in and given to Mrs. Seddon, who, as soon as she had read the superscription, laid it on the table unopened. Mrs. Villars attempted to rise, and in a half-whisper said to her kind hostess, "The dreaded crisis is now at hand; you will now know on what a wretch you have been lavishing your tenderness,—if, after all, you should still continue to pity and protect me;—but I fear it is impossible." Again she sank upon her seat, as if unable to bear the idea of forfeiting the friendship of the only person from whom she could expect the assistance of which she stood in so much need.

After some time Mrs. Villars retired to her chamber, where she remained in a state of mind that no words could do justice to. It was not long before she was joined by her

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friend,

friend, who, taking her hand and pressing it to her lips, seated herself by the trembling Sophia in silence. Tears flowed plentifully from the eyes of both. Mrs. Villars at length rose, and, throwing herself upon her knees, hid her face in the lap of the good Mrs. Seddon, and wept aloud. This compassionate friend raised her with great kindness, and besought her not to refuse consolation; adding, that no affliction, however severe, was beyond the reach of hope and comfort; for if with regard to this world they failed in their desired effect, still as respecting that which was to come, there was a sure and certain support to all who sought it with sincerity and truth. “You did well,” continued the good woman, “my dear young lady, to suppose that I, who have so many failings to accuse myself

myself of, should cherish and protect one who I am sure could not be easily led astray, nor yet, as her present conduct proves, continue long in the path of error." Again they were silent.

When Mrs. Seddon resumed the conversation, it was to continue the foregoing subject, and lead the thoughts of her sorrowing young friend, if possible, to those bright and glorious prospects which are contained in that sacred volume she so highly valued and so constantly perused. She concluded by saying, that if the consolations of friendship were at present insufficient to relieve her distress, she doubted not but time and reflection would produce this happy effect. Mrs. Villars sighed deeply;—reflection she thought could be productive only of misery and despair;—time presented to her view a  
long

long series of years marked with ceaseless and undiminished sorrow ;—what was considered by others a blessing, youth and health, was to her a source of regret ; most gladly would she have exchanged these possessions for age and infirmity.

In the course of the day Mrs. Seddon told her young domestics that she wished to speak to them on a subject which she saw had greatly affected them. “ You have often heard me say, my good girls,” she continued, “ how much more free from temptation and danger is that humble station in which *we* are placed, than one that is more noble and exalted. Sorry I am to say, that the truth of this observation is so fully proved in the sad instance that is now come to our knowledge. Had the situation of this unfortunate young lady

lady been more like that which we enjoy, she would in all probability have continued innocent and happy. Her sad story must be known to the world. It will doubtless soon be known, also, that she has taken up her abode under my humble roof. It is my determination to afford her all the assistance and all the comfort in my power. Many things it is likely will be said to her disadvantage, and perhaps many that are false : whatever error she may have committed, she is truly sorry for it : of this I am persuaded ; and were all the world to blame me for befriending her, I will never forsake her. You will be asked many questions by our inquisitive neighbours ; and though I would not have you in the smallest degree swerve from the truth, I earnestly desire that you will say as little as possible on the subject ;

subject; and never, when it can be avoided, mention it at all, or introduce her name unnecessarily, nor attend to the idle stories of others." The little girls carefully treasured in their minds all that their good mistress had said, and promised to do every thing she required.

As Mrs. Seddon had a small room up stairs of which she made but little use, she fitted it up in the neatest manner for the accommodation of Mrs. Villars, that she never might be liable to the intrusion of any casual visitor. Though the house of Mrs. Seddon was seven miles from Harwood along the carriage-road, there was a much nearer way that led across the fields, with which Sally Pearce was perfectly well acquainted.

When one melancholy week had  
passed



passed slowly over, Mrs. Villars expressed a wish to walk out, and requested Sally would accompany her. They took the road which led to Harwood, and walked on in silence for near two miles ; when reaching the end of a wood by the side of which the path-way lay through several fields, the view was extended, and the house and grounds so familiar, and once so dear to the now exiled Sophia, burst upon her sight. This was what she expected *would* happen, though she was ignorant of the precise spot that would present to her view so interesting an object. No sooner did her eyes encounter the scene which once inspired so much delight, than recollection brought a thousand torturing images to her mind ; a faint sickness seized her ; she felt as though the next moment would bring

her into the presence of her father. Unable to endure these complicated sufferings, she turned from the view of what redoubled her anguish ; and, resting on the arm of her companion, with slow and trembling steps measured back the way to her humble home.

Painful as was the scene she had contemplated, yet there was something in the sorrow which it inspired that led her again and again to seek the indulgence of it. Whilst she surveyed the tranquil beauty which surrounded Harwood, which even winter did not wholly efface, she could not forbear contrasting the serene stillness that every where prevailed, with the distress which pervaded the interior of this late happy mansion. She fancied she saw Amelia drowned in tears, vainly endeavouring to comfort her disconsolate father. Bit-

ter

ter as these reflections were, yet there were others still more so that continually haunted the imagination of the wretched Sophia. Her injured, her unhappy husband ; her dear unconscious children ;—on these sad subjects she would ponder for hours, until reason sometimes so far gave way to despair, that she formed the sudden resolution of putting an end to a life which seemed to be a burthen she had no longer the power to sustain.

To these dreadful conflicts Mrs. Seddon was sometimes a witness. And as she was convinced that no reasoning, no argument which it was in her power to use, could sooth and conciliate a mind so sensible of its own guilt, and so depressed by sorrow, the consequence of that guilt, she had recourse to the only means she conceived capable

ble of producing the change it was so desirable to effect. Her earnest and daily prayer to God was, to regard with an eye of pity this penitent mourner ; to calm her troubled mind ; to bring it into that state which would enable her “to repent with a repentance not to be repented of,” and to give her “that peace which the world cannot give.” In the hope of contributing towards this happy change, the pious Mrs. Seddon selected such parts of Scripture as she thought most calculated to awaken sentiments of gratitude in her hearer, to the Father of mercies, and the Son whom he had sent to be the Saviour of mankind. This was a history, which if it could be said Mrs. Villars had in any measure studied, it was in the most superficial manner. She did not now, however, hear unmoved its precious promises

promises or its awful denunciations : with many passages she was extremely affected ; and sometimes she would forget for a few moments all her worldly afflictions, whilst she rejoiced in the elevated hope, that none, who with a truly sincere and contrite heart should apply to the God of all mercy, would be denied acceptance and favour. But these intervals of peace were short and few, opposed to days and nights of the most consummate distress.

Much as Mrs. Villars had suffered from the view she had taken of Harwood, there was a melancholy gratification in this excess of sorrow, which again induced her to seek the spot where the poignancy of her feelings was enhanced by the local objects she had an opportunity of contemplating. In one of these rambles she ventured within

within two miles of Harwood Park ; when she was taken so extremely ill, and endured such excessive agitation, that poor Sally with tears in her eyes entreated her to return home. She found Mrs. Seddon engaged in reading a weekly paper which she was in the habit of getting from the village ; and, as she was ignorant of there being any thing in it that related to Mrs. Villars, gave it her to read. It was not long before the following paragraph met her eye :—

“ On Thursday last a duel was fought on Putney Common between L— R—— V—— and the Hon. Mr. Villars : the former was severely, but it is hoped not dangerously, wounded. The whole conduct of this young nobleman, previous to and during this rencontre, fully evinced that the safety of  
of

of his antagonist, and not his own, was what he endeavoured to secure. The Earl of —, father to L— R—, was in a state of mind little short of distraction, until the surgeon who dressed the wound assured him there was every prospect of a speedy recovery. Independent of one unhappy act, which was the cause of this hostile interview, L— R— is said to have been free from every description of vice: few young men acquired more general applause, or were more highly esteemed by their particular friends. The unfortunate wife of Mr. V—, who was not less admired and beloved, has retired, it is said, to some remote part of the kingdom, where it is supposed she means to hide in obscurity her sorrows and her disgrace. It is much to be lamented, that among the numerous and  
respectable

respectable friends of Mrs. V——, who are plunged into the deepest distress by her unhappy departure from virtue, is the gallant Lieutenant H——. This brave officer, who has scarcely attained his twentieth year, arrived from Spain but a day or two before his sister eloped, and had distinguished himself in a manner which procured him much celebrity : but he feels so sensibly the shock caused by the misconduct of a favourite sister, that it is feared his present dejection is likely to terminate in a settled melancholy. Mrs. V—— has quitted a most indulgent husband, and two lovely promising children.”

As the house of Mrs. Seddon was small, any noise from the upper rooms could be distinctly heard in the parlour where the good woman was sitting. A deep sigh seemed to issue from the  
apartment



apartment of Mrs. Villars. Sally ran hastily up stairs, followed by her mistress, when they were greatly alarmed to see the unhappy lady fallen back in her chair, pale, and apparently breathless. Again she sighed; and, looking wildly around, exclaimed, "Yet, yet I live! Why did I promise—Hush! it is not that promise which makes me linger here; it is the fear of disobliging Him who has the keys of death, and ——" Here a violent flood of tears prevented her from speaking; which being succeeded by a severe headach, she was prevailed upon to retire to bed, though not to rest.

Mrs. Seddon sat by her in silence. Mrs. Villars lay still for upwards of an hour; then gently removing the curtain, and taking the hand of her friend, she said: "I thought you were there.

How

How very unworthy I am of so much kindness ! Do not be alarmed. I will not add to the guilt I have already incurred, *that* which cannot be atoned for. I know ‘there is no repentance or knowledge in the grave,’....oh ! that I could add, ‘whither I am hastening !’ But I will be patient ; yes, my dear friend, I will be patient. These sufferings cannot last for ever ; and there are times when I feel that I am an object of God’s mercy. I pray when you do not know I pray ; and I repeat some of those consoling promises which you have read to me out of the book which until now has been to me a sealed book.”

Tears streamed from the eyes of Mrs. Seddon, whilst she tried by every possible means to encourage the frame of mind she so greatly wished to see the  
wretched

wretched Sophia preserve : but it was soon interrupted by a less calm and quiet sorrow.

We will now turn our thoughts for a few minutes to Lieutenant Harwood, whom we left under very painful impressions : nor is it necessary to say that those impressions could not be easily effaced. Being obliged to go to London on account of military affairs, he wrote from thence to his father, informing him that it was very uncertain when leave of absence could be obtained, and that it was most probable he should be detained some weeks in the metropolis. Occupied as Lionel Harwood was by his own particular grief, yet he was by no means unmindful of the sacred duties he had promised to perform. The words of his deceased friend were frequently in his thoughts ;

thoughts ; and on the second day after his arrival in town, he repaired to Stoke Newington, where Mrs. Moreland resided. The servant who opened the door of that lady's house was exceedingly struck with the pale countenance, slender figure, and air of languor and dejection which were visible in the appearance and manner of our young soldier ; and hastily showing him into a room, which he supposed was empty, requested he would sit down whilst he inquired whether his mistress was at home. When Lionel entered the parlour, however, he found it was not wholly unoccupied : a young lady was standing near a little recess, in which were placed some books that she appeared to be examining. She showed evident marks of emotion on seeing Mr. Harwood, which he imputed

puted to the sudden entrance of a stranger. She curtsied with a melancholy air, which corresponded with her dress, being that of deep mourning ; then said with a voice that denoted an agitated mind, " You wish to see Mrs. Moreland, sir ? " Lionel replied in the affirmative. The lady added, " She is at present a good deal indisposed ; but I will inquire whether she will venture down stairs. " In saying these words she moved towards the door. As the features of this lady bore not the smallest resemblance to the picture in his possession, Mr. Harwood was certain he could not be speaking to Miss Moreland ; he therefore ventured to make the following reply : " The occasion of my present visit relates more immediately to Miss  
Moreland

Moreland than to her mother : but the circumstances are of too affecting a nature to be communicated, except through the medium of a friend. If you, madam, will have the goodness to execute this painful commission, my seeing Mrs. Moreland at present will be quite unnecessary.”

The lady bowed in silence. She hesitated for a moment ; then requesting Mr. Harwood would be seated, he thus continued : “ When time has softened the grief which I am persuaded Miss Moreland now feels for a loss so afflictive, so recent, she will, I trust, admit amongst the circle of her friends one who was not only honoured with the esteem and confidence of the much-lamented Captain Beavor, but who supported him in the last trying hour ;  
who

who received from his dying lips a sacred charge, which he will in every instance most religiously perform.”

It was with some difficulty that Lionel preserved composure sufficient to pronounce these words with distinctness; his voice began to falter; his eyes were directed to the ground whilst he spoke. On raising them, he was extremely shocked and surprised to see the cheek of the young lady quite colourless, and her countenance expressive of the deepest distress. Assured that she could be no unconcerned auditor, the truth at once flashed upon his mind; in an instant she fell back in her chair; and clasping her hands in an agony of grief, exclaimed, “My brother!”

What were the feelings of Lionel Harwood at this moment! Alarmed  
and

and confused, consternation and distress almost locked up his senses. He had presence of mind, however, to ring the bell for assistance; and whilst his hand was yet holding the string, Mrs Moreland entered the room. Her dismay and astonishment at the scene before her were fully evinced in her looks: but in an instant every thought except that which related to the restoration of her young friend was suspended. In a few minutes Miss Beavor's recovery was so far effected, as to enable her, with Mrs. Moreland's assistance, to leave the room. A very superficial view of Lionel's face was sufficient to convince that lady of his being unintentionally the author, if he really was the author, of the renewal of grief which had so powerfully affected poor Miss Beavor. Making a slight apology

as



as she passed, and promising to return as soon as possible, Mrs. Moreland requested Mr. Harwood would be seated. On her re-entering the parlour, a very long and interesting conversation ensued. Mrs. Moreland said that her daughter's health and spirits totally unfitted her at present for the society even of her intimate friends. Miss Beavor and herself, she said, were her only companions: on a future day she was persuaded that she would have peculiar though a melancholy satisfaction in cultivating the acquaintance of one so highly valued by Captain Beavor.

Previous to Mr. Harwood's taking leave of this lady, he obtained from her Mrs. Wilmot's address, who was aunt to the Miss Beavors, and who, it has already been observed, resided at Guildford. Not many days elapsed

before he set out for that place, and was introduced to an elderly lady of a most prepossessing appearance : she received him with much kindness, though an air of dejection was visible in her whole manner. A letter from Mrs. Moreland had apprized this lady of the intended visit of our young soldier. After a good deal of conversation relative to the affairs of the Miss Beavors, to whom Lionel considered himself as guardian, he accepted some commissions which he hoped to execute to advantage. A part of their property that had been left them by an uncle was disputed, and their right to it questioned, though Lionel believed unjustly, by a distant relation of their mother's. Of the equity of the case, from the simple statement given him by Mrs. Wilmot, Lionel thought himself competent

petent to judge : further than this, his youth and inexperience rendered him in a great degree unqualified for undertaking an affair which required very different talents from those he was possessed of. He was determined, however, to put the cause into the hands of an able advocate. Mr. Harwood did not in this respect make his intentions fully known ; but the interest he evidently took in the affairs of the young ladies was amply sufficient to excite the gratitude of Mrs. Wilmot : she hoped, she said, that her niece Ellen Beavor would be able to see him with more composure than it was now in her power to command, when he had the goodness to repeat his visit. With mutual expressions of regard they parted, each deriving a mournful pleasure from the acquisition of a friend under cir-

cumstances of a painful nature, it is true, yet gratifying in a very high degree.

On the day that Lionel expected a letter from his father in reply to the one he had written, as he was sitting pensively in his lodgings, what was his surprise to see Mr. Harwood enter the room, and soon after announce the arrival of Amelia, whom he had left in the carriage! The various emotions which this meeting produced, it would not be easy to describe: the reader, who is no stranger to the tender ties which are formed in domestic life, will more readily conceive than the writer can express them.

As Lionel had not delayed to put matters in a train to relieve the sisters of his deceased friend from a suspense which they had for some time been subjected

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jected to, he had occasion in the course of the evening to write to Mrs. Wilmot, and eagerly seized the opportunity of relating to his father and sister the affecting particulars of his friend's death, and the request he had made him, well assured that they would not hear with indifference this little narrative; and whatever had a tendency to draw their thoughts from their own immediate affliction, he considered as a circumstance highly desirable. After conversing for some time on this subject, Mr. Harwood and Amelia expressed a wish to accompany Lionel on his next visit to Guildford. A ready assent was given to this proposal, and a postscript was added to the letter signifying their intention.

On the day but one following, Mr. Harwood with his son and daughter  
set

set out for the habitation of Mrs. Wilmot, who received them with every possible mark of grateful attention. After taking some refreshment, Mrs. Wilmot proposed conducting her guests into the drawing-room, where her two nieces were expecting them, Miss Beavor having returned home the preceding day. The circumstances which attended this interview were such as precluded ceremony ; the hearts of all present were deeply engaged in whatever passed ; and although but little was said, *that* little was highly impressive, and the intervals of silence were not marked with vacuity or indifference.

Amelia was so charmed with Miss Beavor, and felt so desirous to pay attention to the survivors of a friend so dear to her brother, that she was easily prevailed

prevailed upon to promise a longer visit before she left London ; nor did Mr. Harwood object to the proposal of accompanying his daughter. It was not many days before this promise was performed, though it was out of the power of Lionel to attend them. Mr. and Miss Harwood prolonged their stay at Guildford greatly beyond the time they had originally proposed ; but they protracted it only on condition that Miss Beavor should accompany them into Cumberland.

Amelia received a letter from Miss Reynolds during the time of her being at Mrs. Wilmot's, having written to that young lady immediately on coming to London. In this letter, Miss Reynolds informed her friend that the two dear children under her care were as well as possible ; that Sir William  
Leslie

Leslie was still in a very precarious state of health ; and that Mr. Villars had left them the day prior to that on which she wrote, without positively saying whither he was going, or when he meant to return ; and that this ambiguity had made them extremely unhappy. She concluded her letter by expressing in the warmest terms her unalterable friendship ; and, in a manner calculated to give as little pain as possible, intimated that nothing could alienate her affections from those she had once tenderly loved, so as to deter her from rendering them every service in her power ; that until she knew where the solitary mourner was to be found, whose mind she was sure could not be enslaved by habitual guilt, she should be a stranger to peace ; that she never closed her eyes to sleep, but the



the image of her lost friend was present to her imagination ; nor did she ever awake that it did not immediately recur.

Many were the tears which the gentle Amelia shed over this affectionate letter, the sentiments in which exactly accorded with her own.

In a very short time after the receipt of this letter, Miss Harwood read the account of the duel between Lord Robert and Mr. Villars, which has already been transcribed. The anxiety that Mr. Harwood and Amelia had felt on Lionel's account had hastened them to town, as well as their impatience to see him ; nor was this motive for their journey wholly causeless. Few had a greater detestation for duelling than this brave young officer : he regarded the custom as disgraceful to civil society ;

and lamented that those who had nobly devoted themselves to the service of their country, should sacrifice a life so dedicated, to private pique or some petty quarrel. Little did he think, whilst he expressed his abhorrence of this barbarous though fashionable mode of resenting an injury, that one of so flagrant a nature as that which now militated against his peace would excite him to avenge the cause of one so dear to him. What was to be done? Tamely to suffer such baseness to escape unpunished, was not to be endured : custom had established this mode of punishment, if punishment should happen to be the result of the trial, and no other could be adopted. Principle at length gave way to resentment : the challenge was given ; but, by the interposition of some unavoidable occurrence,

rence, the intended transaction was delayed. In the mean time Mr. Villars superseded the intention of Lionel, which afforded no small source of consolation to Mr. Harwood and Amelia. After repeated applications, leave of absence was at length obtained; and the two gentlemen, Miss Beavor and Amelia set out on their journey for Cumberland.

Before we notice their arrival at that place, we shall say a few words respecting Lord Robert Vere, who, in a few days subsequent to his dispatching the letter to his father which has already been inserted, received from his sister the following reply.

*To Lord Robert Vere.*

In communicating to a brother whose society I once delighted in, the intelligence

ligence which a lenient though much aggrieved father has commissioned me with, I feel great satisfaction. Did I not acknowledge this, I should wrong my own heart. But whilst I have the happiness to impart tidings which give you liberty to return to this place, I must at the same time inform you, that my sister and myself think ourselves under the necessity of quitting it. So flagrant a violation of all that is dear to peace, virtue, honour, and friendship, and above all to the sacred laws of religion, must not be easily overlooked or pardoned by those females who would be thought to hold vice in proper abhorrence. Were we immediately to receive into our society and favour one who has so grossly offended, though that offender is a brother, we think we should justly incur an imputation which  
we

we earnestly wish to avoid ;—that of giving too much countenance to the perpetrator of an act which we cannot think of without shuddering.

I need not remind you of that harmony and peace in which we have hitherto lived :—Was there ever a more united, a more happy family than ours ?—Indeed, its tranquillity has been sadly broken in upon ! Before you receive this letter, Lady Louisa and myself will probably have accomplished our journey to the Abbey, to which place I would have you order Lucy Summers to repair immediately. Heaven grant she may have it in her power to give me intelligence that will enable me to assist the unfortunate young creature, whose future life must be embittered by remorse, and stamped with indelible disgrace !

You

You must not impute the apparent harshness of this letter to a want of feeling ;—Heaven knows we have felt most acutely : What then must have been the sufferings of others ! But I mean not to reproach you ; your own heart accuses you with sufficient severity. To my father we have said every thing that could soften and conciliate : remember this when you think of your sisters ; and consider there is a duty due to society at large, which they must not infringe.

I cannot close this letter without subscribing myself your still affectionate though unhappy sister,

CHARLOTTE VERE.

In order to form a just idea of the effect which this letter produced on the mind of Lord Robert, it would be necessary

cessary to have a thorough knowledge of the affection which had always subsisted among the young people of this noble family. He lost no time, however, in availing himself of the privilege granted him. In a few hours, Lord Robert was at the feet of his father.

The earl had no conception that he could so soon have beheld his penitent son.—It was now that nature obtained her full triumph :—all the coldness and indignation which Lord —— had been treasuring in his mind to oppose her pleadings, and counteract her influence, fled in an instant : he saw only his contrite child at this interesting moment. He did not, however, lose sight of those important duties imposed upon him by the laws of religion and morality : reproof and admonition were not forgotten in a future and more tranquil hour.

Lord

Lord Robert had not been long at the seat of his father, before he received the challenge from Lieutenant Harwood which has been already mentioned. By some unforeseen circumstance the affair became known to one of the earl's servants, who immediately informed his lordship of what was likely to take place; on which, effectual means were adopted to prevent the intended interview. The meeting between the young nobleman and Mr. Villars took place without his lordship's knowledge.

We will now return to Mrs. Villars, whom we left in a state of mind which those who have never deviated from the path of rectitude can form no conception of. It was some days before her health was sufficiently restored to admit of her walking out: but as  
soon



soon as confinement was no longer necessary, she frequently went out alone, or, if attended by Sally, would sometimes send her back, saying that she should not go far from the house, nor be very long before she returned. These assurances did not always satisfy Mrs. Seddon ; yet she was unwilling to oppose with too much steadiness the wishes of her disconsolate guest.

One fine afternoon, engrossed by her usual melancholy reflections, she came to the stile which had hitherto been the boundary of her walks. An irresistible desire to proceed impelled her forward : sometimes she stopped, and was on the point of returning ; her heart beat so violently that she was frequently obliged to rest, in order to draw breath ; yet still she went on, persuaded that she could now find the way to Harwood.

A sort

A sort of desperation seized her, bordering on phrensy. At length she came within sight of a small gate, which she knew was seldom locked, though but little used. Whilst she stood irresolute whether to proceed or return, she saw a little girl coming along the field, and who she knew lived near Mrs. Seddon. She immediately took her pencil, and wrote on a slip of paper a few lines to assure her friend that she was safe; and that, should she not return that night, she should be with her early the next morning. The little girl having promised to deliver this note as soon as possible, they each took a different way. In a short time a heavy shower came on, from which Mrs. Villars had no means of obtaining shelter; but her thoughts were too much occupied to pay attention to personal inconveniencies.

veniences. In a state of mind which no words can do justice to, she hurried on until she actually reached the gate already mentioned. It was now almost dark, and the rain increased with great violence. She entered the domain without being observed, and without any impediment. On closing the gate, she asked herself whether it was really possible that she was in her father's park, or if it was only an illusion. Alas ! the pang which rent her heart, too faithfully assured her that all was reality.

It was now too dark to fear that her person could be known should she happen to be met by any of the servants ; and even this was improbable, as the rain still continued to fall without intermission. As she drew near the house, she heard men's voices in the out-offices, and the trampling of horses ;  
and,

and, on advancing a little further, saw a number of lights passing quickly from one room to another, both in the upper and lower windows. These circumstances convinced her there must be company. The thought seemed to revive her:—she hoped the sorrow for her misconduct was already much alleviated: then comparing her former with her present [forlorn] situation, she wept bitterly. With some difficulty she discerned the path which she knew led to a gate that opened into the shrubbery, and which in winter was very seldom used; as this part of the grounds was damp, being less exposed to the sun than any other, and more remote from the house. She walked on till she reached a small building which commanded a fine view of the distant country; to this building the family frequently

frequently resorted in summer, but at the present season it was quite neglected. Her first object being now attained, her strength, which seemed to be inspired by anxiety and fear, totally failed her, and she threw herself almost breathless on the ground, her head resting on one of the seats, regardless of her wet clothes and the damp situation of every thing around her. She was now not far from the windows of those rooms that were constantly in use; these windows looked upon the lawn, and were easy of access, being made to reach the ground. In the fine evenings of summer, the shutters were never closed until the family retired for the night, nor were they in winter regularly shut at an early hour.

Having continued some time in the state described, Mrs. Villars at length collected

collected all her fortitude, and ventured towards the lawn. She soon came in view of the front, in which were the two rooms that the family constantly used : she saw a bright light in each. What a moment was this ! on what a scene was she going to rush ! A thought struck her that had not until now occurred ; it was possible that she might be within a few yards of her husband—her children— !

She stood fixt as a statue : her heart beat, as though it would burst the prison in which it was confined : convulsive throbs shook her whole frame. At length she exclaimed softly, “ I can but die :——Die ! O that Heaven in mercy would pity, forgive, and release me from this dreadful suffering ! ” Then after a pause she added, “ But it must not be. I will try, however,  
what

what this wretched frame *can* sustain.” She went on until she came opposite to the windows of the drawing-room. She plainly discerned Amelia sitting at a small table, and Elizabeth standing by her side. The latter appeared to be relating something with great earnestness, whilst the former listened and wept alternately, and occasionally kissed the cheek of the little narrator. A sickness and tremor quite overcame Mrs. Villars, whilst she contemplated this touching scene ; and at length, being no longer able to support herself, she fell to the ground entirely bereft of all consciousness. By slow degrees her senses returned ; and when she had recollection sufficient to know where she was, she again directed her eyes towards the windows, but the room was empty : she walked on till she  
came

came opposite to the dining-parlour ; that too was empty : still there were candles in several of the upper rooms. She returned to her former station, and in a few minutes a servant entered with a tray full of china. How she trembled ! Now indeed was the eventful crisis at hand. Amelia returned, leaning on the arm of a young lady, to whose person Mrs. Villars was a stranger, followed by Elizabeth. It was now that she observed her sister wore a travelling dress, as well as the lady who accompanied her. Again the door opened. It was her father who entered, with her two youngest brothers and their tutor. She turned from the heart-piercing sight : the pale and dejected countenance of this dear parent drew fresh tears from her eyes. Again she ventured to approach ;—her brother Lionel  
nel



nel walked up to the window :—involuntarily she sank to the ground, hiding her face with her hands.

Unable long to bear a situation which she conceived to be one of suspense, having an idea that she might be discovered, with the most agonizing sensations she raised her head. Her imaginary fears of immediate detection vanished in an instant :—all was dark and silent. Extreme despondency now succeeded to violent agitation : the cold damp air and her wet clothes produced an universal shivering. On returning to the summer-house, she had the precaution to walk backward and forward in order to lessen the danger of taking cold, until excessive fatigue obliged her to relinquish all exertion.

Mrs. Villars made these efforts from a principle of duty, sensible that the

danger of her health sustaining essential injury was almost inevitable. When weakness and fatigue put it out of her power to obviate in any measure this danger, she felt a satisfaction from the thought that necessity obliged her to submit to the consequences of an evil which she could not now avoid. She considered, too, that without rest it was utterly impossible she could accomplish the long walk which she meant to undertake as soon as the morning began to dawn.

In the course of two or three hours the clouds dispersed, and the moon rose in full splendour, enlivening the disconsolate abode of poor Sophia with her reviving rays: she could now distinctly observe the objects around her, and felt a little cheered on being thus relieved from almost total darkness.

The

The furniture, which in summer embellished and rendered useful this little building, was principally removed: in one corner, however, she found some matting, and, having unfolded it, made with it a substitute for a bed, on which she hoped to lose in forgetfulness a small portion of the time that must intervene before she could leave her solitary retreat.

Whilst she was trying to court the aid of a friend whose visits she was but too well accustomed to solicit in vain, she heard footsteps on the gravel walk that led to the asylum in which she had taken refuge. She started up, and ran to the window:—It was Lionel!—he was yet some yards from the door, and advanced slowly and with a dejected air.

Scarcely sensible of the act, she laid her hand upon the lock. That he

would enter she had not a doubt. All that she had suffered during this eventful evening, seemed as nothing when compared with the torture of this trying moment. “*I cannot see him!*” she softly uttered. “O Death! will not misery like mine allure thee?” Despair gave her strength:—she felt the lock move. He imagined the door was fastened, and, immediately desisting, turned down another walk.

Once more she was relieved from an interview which, if when considered as at a distance she thought she could bear, became as it approached so replete with terror as to disarm her of all the fortitude she had tried to collect.

After some minutes had elapsed, she again saw her brother pass, whose figure gradually vanished from her sight;  
and

and a general and uninterrupted silence prevailed during the rest of the night, which she did not pass wholly without sleep, though the intervals of her being under its influence were few and short.

As soon as morning began to appear, the disconsolate Sophia quitted her place of shelter, and at an early hour reached the humble but secure home, of which she now more than ever felt the full value. She saw her anxious friend sitting at the window, as if watching for her return. Their eyes met, and at the same instant the good woman raised her hands in the attitude of thankfulness. Mrs. Villars rushed into the arms which were opened to receive her; but neither she nor her friend could utter one word. By degrees the latter learnt some of the particulars which had happened to the unprotected wanderer

derer since her departure ; but the inconveniencies she had suffered were palliated as much as possible. After taking some tea, Mrs. Villars, who was quite exhausted with fatigue, most thankfully acceded to the proposal Mrs. Seddon made of her going immediately to bed. She slept for some hours ; but as soon as she awoke was seized with a violent shivering and pain in all her limbs. She made no complaint, however, fearful that she had already occasioned Mrs. Seddon considerable anxiety. This conjecture was confirmed on questioning Sally Pearce, who acknowledged that the good woman had never been in bed. When the little girl she saw brought the note, she was so far from being satisfied with the information it contained, that she immediately sent a man who lived in the  
neigh-

neighbourhood with a lantern, and directions to go to the gates of Harwood Park, should he not meet the lady of whom he was in quest before he arrived there. About ten o'clock the person returned without any tidings; when she declared her resolution of sitting up all night, and kept a light in the window in case Mrs. Villars should come back, which would inform her that she could be immediately admitted. This affectionate attention endeared Mrs. Seddon more than ever to her grateful young friend.

When Sophia attempted to rise, she found the stiffness and pain in her limbs so great that she was utterly unable to leave her bed. Mrs. Seddon was convinced that the disorder was a severe cold, and applied such remedies as she  
thought

thought most likely to subdue the complaint.

In the course of the morning a letter was brought for Mrs. Seddon, the bearer of which said it did not require any answer,—The contents were as follow :—

*Dear and excellent Friend,*

We are no strangers to your goodness ; we know that you have cherished and protected our unfortunate but still dear fugitive. How greatly has this assurance lessened the dread of what yet might happen ! heavy as is the calamity, it admitted of increase. Thanks to Heaven and you, this fear is now nearly subdued ; I am no longer a prey to the corroding idea of a misguided sister continuing a willing victim to  
splendid



splendid guilt, or a destitute wanderer without a home and without a friend. Consoling indeed is the thought, that she is now safe under your hospitable roof; and that she has returned to that path of rectitude which surely no common temptation could induce her to quit. No conjecture that I can form on this grievous subject in any degree appears probable; but I suspect that the artless unsuspecting vivacity of her temper has been taken advantage of by the specious snares of designing villany. When I think of what she was, I cannot but compare her unsullied sweetness with the fair lily that rears its modest head amidst these sheltering woods;—such was the unblemished purity of my own Sophia Harwood. Had she, like this beautiful flower, flourished in her native soil, she would still

have been the pride of my heart, as well as the sister of my affections.

This evening we returned from London ; and this evening were informed that the dear mourner,—for such I am sure she is,—has all the consolation which a kind and conciliating friend can bestow. This subject has so entirely occupied my mind that I cannot think of sleep, though it is now near three o'clock. It is but an hour ago since my dear father and I parted. When our plan is fully arranged, you shall hear from me again.

Unless you have some particular motive, you need not mention this letter.

Ever, dearest Mrs. Seddon, believe me most truly yours,

AMELIA HARWOOD.

Mrs. Seddon no sooner cast her eye over this affectionate letter, than she felt  
impatient

impatient to communicate its contents : but a very little reflection convinced her that Mrs. Villars's weak state of health and spirits rendered her unequal to hear with composure the tender expressions of sisterly love which it contained : she therefore without reluctance resolved to comply with Miss Harwood's proposal, and not mention the circumstance till it should be disclosed by degrees, as time and opportunity might direct. After suffering much pain, and passing a very restless night, Mrs. Villars appeared to have a considerable degree of fever. Gladly would Mrs. Seddon have sent for the physician who attended at Harwood ; but this Mrs. Villars forbade her to do in so peremptory a manner that she was obliged to acquiesce : she determined, however, to write privately to Miss Harwood, should  
there

there not soon be a change for the better. This change seemed to be produced on the following day : the fever was certainly abated ; and Mrs. Villars left her bed with less difficulty than was expected, though she had still considerable pain and stiffness over her whole person. For some days she continued to recover in every respect but one ; her breathing was still very much affected, though her hoarseness was removed.

In a short time a second letter arrived from Miss Harwood, which was expressed in the following terms :—

“ I now write, my dear friend, to say that our plans are arranged, and that their completion solely depends on the determination of her for whom they are formed. I thought it better that  
you:

you should be silent on this subject until every thing was prepared for the reception of the dear sufferer. We wish her to come to Harwood as soon as possible after the proposal is made : the interval that passes between the time of our making this request and her acceding to it, must I am sure be most painful. If it could be done with safety, we should be glad to surprise her into a compliance, that she might be spared as much as possible the dread of so formidable a meeting. However, we mean to be entirely governed by you, both as to the manner and time of disclosing our intentions. On this account we wish very much to see you, and if you approve of it the carriage will be sent tomorrow morning to convey you to Harwood. As you have frequently visited us in the same manner, this circumstance can afford no cause for suspicion ;

spicion ; and that the receipt of this letter may excite none, the bearer has orders to see you alone. A few lines in reply will greatly oblige us.

“ Lest we should be disappointed in the hope we indulge of seeing you to-morrow, I shall give you a slight sketch of our design as relates to the unhappy Sophia : at the same time rest assured, my excellent friend, that we are *more* than satisfied with her present safe and comfortable abode ; nor do we mean to urge her to quit it should she appear unwilling to do so. If she consent to return to Harwood, she is to take possession of the Green room furnished with chintz, and the dressing-room next to it. These apartments, you know, are more remote from those in common use than any other, and particularly from that part of the house where those rooms are situated that Sophia formerly occupied ;

pied ; which was my principal inducement for making choice of them, as the objects will be fewer that are likely to recal former scenes to her remembrance. In the light closet that joins the dressing-room I have placed a small sofa bed, which I hope will be appropriated to the use of Sally Pearce, as I am persuaded you will cheerfully resign her to my poor sister on such an occasion as this ; and I am so perfectly convinced of the affectionate disposition of this amiable girl, that I cannot doubt but her services will be in the highest degree acceptable. In the dressing-room we have placed the piano, of which Sophia was remarkably fond ; the little cabinet which I finished last year I have also removed to this apartment, furnished with my simple collection of local rarities. The work table which was sent Elizabeth from London, she  
never

never had so much pleasure in using as she now feels in relinquishing it to another. We have filled all its compartments with materials for ornamental work of every description: nor are implements for drawing forgotten. The book shelves, which you were pleased to say were so ornamental in my dressing closet, I have fixed here, and have furnished with such authors as I thought best calculated to engage her attention, tranquillize her mind, and lead her thoughts from the contemplation of her own particular sorrow. These rooms are to be sacred to friendship and affection; none shall presume to enter but those to whom their mistress shall give free access: by degrees I hope she will feel reconciled to the thoughts of associating with us, at least occasionally.

“Should our conduct be condemned.  
by



by an unpitying world, had I an opportunity of replying to its censure, my answer would be to refer that world to the beautiful parable of the Prodigal Son, which I think all must acknowledge is intended as an example for our imitation. If he who committed no sin could look with an eye of pity on the contrite offender, shall *we* who are prone to error treat with harshness a beloved relative whose repentance I am sure is sincere? Her departure from virtue, it is true, has been most grievous; but her recovery from the fatal delusion was speedy, and I am persuaded it is also secure. I am ashamed to say with how little attention I have until now read this pathetic allegory, as well as other parts of the sacred volume in which it is contained. But, if my life is spared,  
future

future care shall in some measure atone for past neglect.

“ On the night of our return from London, when my dear father and I were left alone, and had each expressed our earnest wish that the reclaimed mourner should be consoled with the tender assurances of our love and pity, my father brought a Bible from the library, and read the chapter in St. Luke which I have already alluded to. Oh ! how we wept ! With what ‘ form of prayer ’ could I, dear Mrs. Seddon, supplicate the pardon of Heaven, were I to refuse to my afflicted sister that compassion and assistance which I know she must so greatly require ? To the true spirit of the fable shall we strictly adhere ; and though we do not literally kill the fatted calf, select sumptuous raiment and make merry, yet shall we  
most

most sincerely rejoice, that one ‘who was dead is alive again, was lost and is found.’ But I repeat, that by my sister’s wishes and your judgement we mean to be guided. If she cannot as yet overcome her scruples, time I am persuaded will enable her to do it. I have in store for her many many sources of comfort ; but gradually and with extreme caution shall we unfold to her depressed mind our projected plans for stealing from it its bitterest pangs. But whilst we try to draw her as it were out of herself, I am aware that infinite care must be taken not to fatigue her harassed spirits. For some time it must be expected that she will feel disinclined to mix with our family circle ; yet I cannot forbear anticipating the period when she will again be cheered by the soothing intercourse of  
domestic

domestic union. Our incomparable friend Miss Reynolds, who has undertaken the care of the dear children, will, I trust, be allowed to spend a part of every year with us.

“O my dear friend, I sometimes feel as if I could hope for what I consider the next moment as impossible : but circumscribed and limited as future pleasures must be when contrasted with my late fears, they assume an aspect more flattering than they perhaps ought to wear. But I have already insensibly trespassed upon you too much ; and I now hasten to subscribe myself your most sincere and grateful friend,

“AMELIA HARWOOD.”

So greatly was Mrs. Seddon affected with reading this most kind and pathetic letter, that it was some time before she

she could sufficiently compose her spirits to enter the room of her patient, without fearing to excite suspicion of something extraordinary having occurred. As the good woman could not feel satisfied to leave Mrs. Villars in her present situation, she wrote a few lines to Miss Harwood, acquainting her that Mrs. Villars had caught a severe cold which had confined her for some time to her own room, but that she was now a great deal better : she added that she was sure Miss Harwood would think this a sufficient reason for her declining to accept her kind offer, which otherwise she should gladly have embraced.

On the following morning, soon after Mrs. Villars had quitted her chamber, she heard the voice of a stranger below stairs, who appeared to be earnestly

nestly conversing with Mrs. Seddon. In a few minutes the latter came up, and, after some preparation for the introduction of an unexpected visitor, announced the arrival of Doctor M. It will readily be supposed that Mrs. Villars could not receive this intelligence with composure; and whilst she seemed irresolute what to say, Mrs. Seddon took advantage of her apparent perplexity, and conducted the Doctor up stairs, lest by delay she should run the hazard of being forbidden to do so. Doctor M. was prepared to see a great change in Mrs. Villars, and also expected that this meeting would cause her to be extremely agitated; yet he had formed no idea until he saw her, of the pale and emaciated looks which her appearance exhibited.

It was some time before he could  
calm

calm her mind sufficiently to obtain from his patient such answers as he wished respecting her health. Having in some measure effected this, he told her there was a lady in the parlour whom he wished to speak to ; and immediately added, “ You must allow me, Mrs. Villars, to bring this lady up stairs.” He waited not for a reply, and the next minute the two sisters were folded in each other’s arms.

Doctor M. having given it as his opinion that Mrs. Villars might be removed to Harwood with safety, Amelia represented so forcibly the inconvenience which must be attended by her continuing where she was, on account of the smallness of Mrs. Seddon’s house, yet declared with so much tenderness that to leave her sister in her present state of health was impossible,  
that

that Mrs. Villars could no longer oppose the wishes of the affectionate Amelia.

We will not dwell on the perturbation of spirits which this awful and affecting change produced in the mind of poor Mrs. Villars ; yet she tried to sustain the conflicts she endured with all the apparent calmness she could command, lest her sister should reflect upon herself for having called forth feelings which her weakened frame appeared scarcely able to support.

As soon as Miss Harwood had obtained the wished-for promise, she sent Sally Pearce with a note to her father, apprising him of the circumstance, and requesting that no one but himself would appear to welcome their disconsolate visitor. This kind parent almost carried the half-fainting Sophia to the  
apartments



apartments allotted for her use, and by the most tender assiduities endeavoured to calm and conciliate a mind so conscious of its own errors, that every word, every look, bespoke a conviction of the painful truth.

In the course of the following week Mrs. Villars grew evidently worse; her cough returned with increased violence, and her difficulty of breathing became much greater. One morning being for a few minutes alone with Doctor M., she said, "I am going to ask a question, sir, which I earnestly entreat you will answer in the most candid manner." She then, after expressing her hope of not being mistaken in supposing he regarded her complaint as incurable, conjured him to acquaint her with his real sentiments. As the Doctor was convinced that Mrs. Vil-

lars's disorder was attended with every symptom that indicated a rapid and confirmed consumption, he had for some time been apprehensive that it would have a fatal termination. He therefore felt relieved, to find that in so reduced and hopeless a state she retained strength of mind sufficient to look forward to the awful change which probably awaited her, not only with firmness, but with joy and exultation. Doctor M. could not however forbear fearing that, when the momentous truth should be pronounced, and the veil removed that had hitherto concealed in some measure her future destiny, the fortitude by which she was now supported might forsake her. A variety of emotions assailed his compassionate heart, and the agitation and embarrassment which became visible  
in

in his countenance and manner, convinced Mrs. Villars that the solemn event to which she had alluded he considered as inevitable. This transition from suspense to certainty evidently affected her ; but she soon regained her former composure, and, in terms expressive of the utmost gratitude, thanked her kind friend for all the attention he had shown her, and the solicitude he had felt to subdue a complaint which she was convinced was beyond the power of human art to remove.

In about a week after this conversation, the return of Mrs. Villars's birthday excited more forcibly those feelings which had already very powerfully impressed her mind. The dawn of this morning was anticipated by extreme agitation : after many hours of painful suffering, the unhappy Sophia arose more

fatigued by the perturbation of her spirits than refreshed with the small portion of rest she had obtained. She had made a request on the preceding evening that no one but Sally Pearce should enter her apartments during this day ; a day which was once celebrated at Harwood with every mark of festivity and joy : by her who was wont to receive the congratulations of surrounding and delighted friends, it was now to be dedicated to deep humiliation, penitence, and prayer. After sitting for some time apparently plunged in thought, she ordered Sally to reach her writing-desk, and at various intervals in the course of the day committed to paper the following reflections :

FRAG-

## FRAGMENTS.

“ I have this day completed my twenty-third year. Awful sentence! These periods, which are gone for ever, rise to my imagination like the ghosts of departed friends, whose counsels I have slighted, and on whose favours I have set no value until they were torn from my possession. Their reproaches are silent, but oh! how wounding! well may I say they pierce me with many sorrows.

“ When the heart that dictates these agonizing reflections shall no longer be sensible of its present sufferings, and when the feeble hand that tries faintly to trace them on paper shall be cold and motionless, let not sorrow for an unworthy object tarnish the brightness of your days, my kind, my too indulgent

gent friends ! How dear to memory is the recollection of all your goodness, your almost unequalled tenderness ! Whilst one tie remains that binds me to earth, these remembrances will cling to my lingering soul : I can only resign them when I resign to Him those powers who gave me all I ever did or can possess, and who, I trust, will ere long, through the mediation of a blessed Saviour, receive my spirit. Yes, my beloved friends ! the glorious promises contained in the everlasting Gospel shine on my benighted mind as the lights of heaven irradiate the clouds which surround them. When I meditate on this wonderful, this gracious scheme of redemption to save a sinful world, my soul seems already on the wing ; her powers appear to expand, and soar beyond the limits of mortality.

“ Alas !

“ Alas! how mutable are my feelings, and how transient is my triumph! How soon are these holy aspirations repressed by that consciousness of guilt which humbles me even to the dust! But thanks be to my gracious God, and to the Son of his love, it is not the uniformly pious, devout, and faithful Christian alone that shall be admitted into the kingdom of righteousness, but the sincere, contrite, and penitent offender also. Think of this, my beloved father, my affectionate Amelia! and rejoice that she who now grieves for the sorrow she has caused you, will, when you read these effusions of an oppressed heart, be removed to those regions of peace which lie beyond the grave.

“ Happy are they who have never deviated from that sublime and elevated path

path whose termination is in that heavenly country ! And what inexpressible gratitude swells my heart, when I consider that those who have long been strangers to this path of rectitude and truth are encouraged to resume it !”

It was with some difficulty Mrs. Villars finished the last sentence, and, on quitting her pen, was prevailed upon by her young attendant to retire to rest.

In a few days her brother was under the necessity of leaving Harwood, in order to rejoin his regiment ; but, on taking leave of his sister, gave her reason to hope that he should soon be allowed to re-visit his friends in Cumberland.

When Mrs. Villars had recovered her usual degree of composure after this parting interview, her mind seemed  
to



to acquire a more placid frame than it had hitherto done since the commencement of her misfortunes. Many hours of the day were devoted to the study of the Scriptures, which were read to her by her sisters alternately with Mrs. Seddon (who was a constant visitor at Harwood) and Sally Pearce. The penitential psalms of David frequently affected Mrs. Villars extremely, whilst the gracious and solemn promises contained in the Gospel elevated her mind almost beyond the powers which her enfeebled frame was enabled to support.

One morning, after Doctor M. had left his patient with impressions very unfavourable as respected her returning health, he met Mr. Harwood in the hall, who entreated him to prolong his visit for a few minutes. On entering the parlour, Mr. Harwood said, "I

wished to ask you, Doctor, what your real sentiments are with regard to poor Mrs. Villars ; but I believe it is unnecessary ; your countenance but too truly, I fear, indicates what I dread to hear you confirm." Doctor M. confessed that there were symptoms in Mrs. Villars's disorder which wore an alarming aspect, but that he was willing to derive hope from her youth, and from the almost uninterrupted good health she had formerly enjoyed.

They were both for some time silent, when Mr. Harwood resumed the conversation, by saying, with an emotion which he could not suppress, "How grievously is this affliction enhanced from the conviction of having been accessory to it ! I see you are surprised, but the fact is too clear to admit of the smallest doubt : adversity has taught  
me

me what prosperity prevented me from discerning. I am convinced, now it is too late, that in the education of my children I have neglected what ought to have been my first care to instil into their young minds; the importance of religious principles: destitute of these qualities, however promising a character may be, instability of conduct is always to be feared. I once thought I saw in Sophia Harwood, an union of whatever could gratify the wishes of the fondest parent: had I faithfully discharged the duties which I ought to have considered as indispensable, this opinion might perhaps have been justly formed, and my lost, my unhappy child might at this hour have been the pride and the delight of my heart. Would to Heaven that *I* alone had suffered from this fatal neglect! Oh! Doctor M.,

M., you too are a parent ; may you never know what it is to feel the pangs which I endure !”

In pronouncing these words, Mr. Harwood hurried out of the room quite overcome with the violence of his feelings.

For some weeks Mrs. Villars’s disorder continued to exhibit symptoms that were certainly of an alarming nature ; yet her health was in that variable state which at intervals inspired those about her with some degree of hope. This impression was strengthened by the increased equanimity and even cheerful state of her mind. As she became more convinced that her complaints must terminate in death, her spirits became more raised, though tranquil. She one day asked the Doctor whether he thought it *possible* that she could recover.

cover. As he hesitated, and seemed distressed how to reply to a question so direct, he added, "Did you but know, Doctor, the *nature* of my anxiety on this subject, you would not feel the smallest reluctance in acquainting me with what I hope and trust are still your real sentiments." Doctor M. expressed great concern that she should harbour wishes which he said were not consistent with the good sense and pious disposition she possessed, and which he also said might have a tendency to impede the recovery so anxiously desired by her kind friends. These words drew from her eyes the tears of affection and gratitude; but recovering her firmness, she made the following reply, in a manner expressive of the utmost gentleness and humility: "I am sorry, sir, that you should condemn me for  
indulging

indulging wishes, in the completion of which I can alone look for an exemption from sorrow. I flattered myself this was no crime, as I hope I have endeavoured, above all other things, to bring my mind into that state which will enable me to submit without a murmur to the will of God. I can with truth and thankfulness assure you, that, knowingly, I have done nothing to hasten the event to which I look forward with perhaps too much impatience. The complaint which I labour under, was not intentionally though imprudently incurred: at the time I caught this severe cold, my thoughts were too much occupied by the peculiar and distressing situation I was in, to pay much attention to my health; yet I recollect that, from a principle of duty, I avoided remaining stationary whilst  
it

it was in my power to use any degree of exercise, sensible that my wet clothes must expose me to imminent danger of taking a most severe cold. If I have wished with too much earnestness for a release from my present state of suffering, may God in his infinite mercy pardon this as well as all my other offences!" Doctor M. would have replied, but felt himself unable to do so.

After a pause of some minutes, Mrs. Villars thus continued : " Think not, dear sir, that I can be ungrateful to friends whose unmerited and almost unequalled kindness have laid me under obligations, which during the longest life it would never be in my power to repay. My death I know will sensibly afflict them; but eventually it must be a means of restoring their former happiness; *mine* I humbly hope it will



will seal for ever. Here, I could only linger in protracted misery, a burthen to those I love, though their tenderness will not allow them to consider me as such." Again her tears flowed.

From the manner in which the Doctor took his leave, she was convinced that his opinion was exactly such as accorded with her wishes. In the afternoon, on awaking from a short sleep, and finding no one in her apartment but Sally, she ordered her to reach her writing-desk; when, with much difficulty and many interruptions, she accomplished her purpose by producing the following letter to Mr. Villars:—

“ Under no circumstances but those in which I am now placed, could I presume, most injured of men, to solicit that forgiveness of which I am so unworthy.



worthy. Though the grave cannot hide my disgrace, yet would my passage to that silent mansion be smoothed by the assurance that you pardon my highly aggravated offence. If it is not too much to expect, will you with your own hand write these few words, 'Sophia, I forgive you.' Were this petition granted, I should then have but one ardent wish to gratify; but one hope that I should feel anxious might on a future day be accomplished. O that you would promise me hereafter to plead with her who has become the nominal mother of my children, really and actually to take upon herself that character! How sweet and consoling would such a persuasion be to my dejected mind!

"I have sometimes thought, that were I to be once more blessed with the sight  
of

of my precious but deserted children, I could die with greater satisfaction ; but I believe such an indulgence would be unfavourable to the calmness I am endeavouring to possess.

“ You are perhaps surprised to hear that one who has so grievously offended against all laws, human and divine, should presume to hope for what seems adapted only to the good and virtuous ! — Oh ! Charles, I have found a balm even for a wounded conscience. The treasures of an immortal existence are opened before me ; the glorious Gospel of our suffering but now exalted Redeemer assures me, even *me*, that by means of his death and resurrection I shall find mercy and acceptance from *his* Father and our Father.

“ For hours could I enlarge on this animating, this reviving subject, had I strength.

strength to command my pen ;—but already it drops from my feeble hand. You will trace my weakness in these characters, which I fear are scarcely legible.

“ SOPHIA.”

Mrs. Villars was so much exhausted on finishing the above, that she had not the power to fold and direct it ; but having ordered Sally to place it in her port-folio, she deferred giving her the necessary instructions for sending it to the office until the following day.

All the relief that it was possible for sympathizing friendship to impart, this sorrowing family received from the affectionate assiduities of the amiable Miss Beavor. As far as feminine excellence could assimilate with those qualities which adorned and elevated the mind  
of

of her admirable brother, so far did this young lady resemble that noble officer.

In the course of a week after the letter was sent away which Mrs. Villars had written to her husband, a very perceptible change had taken place in her appearance, and her strength had greatly declined ; yet she did not suffer acutely, and was sometimes quite exempt from pain. During these intervals, a sweet serenity diffused itself over her features, and she endeavoured to raise the drooping spirits of those about her by assuming an appearance of cheerfulness. One morning, whilst she was listening to some of her favourite psalms read to her by Miss Beavor, she suddenly heaved a deep sigh and fainted. Miss Beavor instantly applied the usual remedies, but soon found that  
the

the change which had taken place was of no transient nature : the impression of death was already on her features ; yet so gentle and so sudden was his approach, that Miss Beavor could scarcely persuade herself the awful event had really occurred. Happily for this young lady Mrs. Seddon was in the room, who requested Miss Beavor would collect all her fortitude in order to impart the affecting intelligence to the family. Lest Miss Harwood or Elizabeth should enter unprepared the chamber of death, Miss Beavor hastened to perform this painful task. Amelia was still in her own room, having passed the greatest part of the night with her sister. Miss Beavor pressed her hands with an air of the greatest kindness : “ Amelia, my love,” she said with a faltering voice,

voice, "the wishes of our dear sufferer are accomplished; her trial is over." Miss Harwood thought herself prepared for the worst; but no sooner did she learn that death had actually separated her from one so dear, than the sad truth pierced her affectionate heart with a sorrow as acute as though it had not been softened by those progressive changes which had gradually foretold its approach. No entreaties could dissuade her from instantly seeing her departed sister; and kneeling down by the sofa on which she lay, she bathed her pale cheek with the tears of affection and sorrow. Poor Elizabeth was still less aware of this sudden event; but by Mr. Harwood it had been daily expected.

In the evening, Miss Beavor feeling herself greatly oppressed, just as day  
was

was closing, went into the shrubbery to try if the air would revive her : she had not been there long before she saw a gentleman and lady coming slowly on the walk which led to a private entrance from the park. The former she soon discovered to be Lionel ; and the shock which she knew he would receive on hearing what could not be concealed, most painfully wounded her sensibility. She stood motionless as a statue, and tears were the only answer she could return to the questions eagerly asked by Lionel concerning his sister. He remained for a few moments silent, then striking his forehead with vehemence, was turning away ; but on hearing the voice of Miss Reynolds, in a tone of exquisite distress, call on her departed friend, he stopped, and they were proceeding slowly towards the house, when



when Lionel again retreated, as if unable to encounter the scene which awaited him. Miss Reynolds clasped her hands in an agony of grief, exclaiming, "What shall I do? What will become of Mr. Villars?"—"And is Mr. Villars here?" said Miss Beavor hastily. "He is," replied Miss Reynolds, "and the children; they are in the carriage." "He must not enter, indeed he must not," said Miss Beavor; "but I will immediately prepare Mr. Harwood for your reception." Having done so, Lionel hastened to embrace his father; and Miss Beavor accompanied Miss Reynolds to the carriage, where the unhappy Mr. Villars waited in the most painful state of suspense.

He was extremely affected when he found his fears were but too just; that death had deprived him of the satisfaction



tion he should have felt in soothing the disconsolate mind of her who had earnestly sought his forgiveness. Many kind words had he treasured in his heart to say : but they were treasured in vain ; the object for whom they were intended was gone without knowing that he even pitied her.

After leaving the children in the care of the ladies, Mr. Villars gave orders to be driven to the nearest inn. Here he passed a sleepless night, and on the following morning wrote to a gentleman in the neighbourhood with whom he had formed a considerable degree of intimacy on his former visits to Harwood. Mr. Watson no sooner received this note, than he immediately replied to it in person, and insisted on taking Mr. Villars with him to his own house, where he assured him he should be

free from all intruders. This proposal met with no opposition, as Mr. Villars could not feel satisfied to leave the country until after the interment of his unfortunate wife: yet his delicacy prevented him from obtruding, unsolicited, on a family whose sorrows would unavoidably be renewed by his presence.

In the afternoon of the following day a note was given to Mrs. Seddon, containing these words:—

“ Will you have the kindness, my good Mrs. Seddon, to be in the wainscot parlour this evening at eleven o’clock, and take care that the approach to it by way of the narrow passage is accessible? My friend earnestly wishes to pay one farewell visit to her who was once the object of his fondest affections. I am convinced the benevolence of your disposition

disposition will lead you to comply with this request of yours, &c.

“ C. WATSON.

“ P. S. If you think the family will not have retired to their respective apartments at the hour mentioned above, will you have the goodness to appoint any other which you may judge more advisable?”

Mrs. Seddon fixed on the hour of twelve, and the gentlemen were punctual to the time. Mrs. Seddon conducted Mr. Villars in silence to the room where lay the remains of his once adored Sophia. Her features still retained the same placid expression which they wore previous to her dissolution. The image of death, as yet, resembled sleep more than the form he usually assumes.

Whilst Mr. Villars gazed on her inanimate but tranquil countenance, all her virtues rushed upon his imagination: her invariable sweetness of disposition, the tender assiduities which as wife and mother her conduct once evinced, were recollected, and her errors were almost forgotten. For some time he stood entranced in thought; then turning to his weeping companion, with an energy which accorded with the poignancy of his feelings, "Oh! Mrs. Seddon," he exclaimed, "if this fair flower had continued to flourish in its native soil, would she not still have been, as she once was, all that my lavish heart could wish? But I, I exposed her to temptations for which her youth and inexperience, her open unguarded temper, rendered her unequal." The conviction of this truth struck his mind so forcibly,

forcibly, that the unhappy man was quite overcome with a thought so replete with anguish, and he burst into a passionate flood of tears.

After some time, Mrs. Seddon drew him with difficulty from a scene which inspired such tender but unavailing sorrow.

On the fifth day after her decease the remains of Mrs. Villars were laid by those of her mother, and her grave was covered with a plain white marble, on which, in conformity with her own wishes, no inscription was engraven. Many of the neighbouring families were in the church when the hearse arrived, who felt a melancholy pleasure in paying this last sad tribute to one who was once the ornament and the enlivener of their social circles, the friend of the afflicted, and the patroness of the poor.

Before

Before the family separated for the night, Mr. Harwood took an opportunity of addressing his young people in the following words:—"As a period can never I think occur that will better prepare our minds for the reception of serious and important truths, I wish, my dear children, to mention to you a circumstance which I cannot but reflect upon with the deepest regret. The recent calamity we have experienced has taught me a lesson, of which, unhappily for myself and others, I have too long been ignorant:—Would to Heaven that *I* alone had been the sufferer! But it is almost impossible that neglect such as I have been guilty of, should not involve those most dear to me in its injurious consequences.

"To the defective mode of education which has been adopted with regard to  
*all*

*all* my children, do I principally impute the errors that have marked the conduct of *one*. Had I taken care to have instilled the principles of religion into your young minds as soon as they were capable of receiving its beneficial influence, we might have been spared the affliction with which we are at this time visited. The desire I feel to atone, in the best manner now in my power, for having failed in this most essential duty, no words can sufficiently express. That its advantages are incalculable, no one who reflects seriously will, I think, presume to deny. What but the supports and consolation of religion could have enabled your sister to meet death with that serenity and firmness with which she saw its approach? Let me then conjure you, my dearest children, as you value your own peace and the  
peace

peace of your affectionate though culpable parent, direct your thoughts with all possible diligence to a subject of such infinite moment."

Amelia, who sat next to her father, and who was extremely hurt to hear these self-accusations, taking his hand, which she pressed to her lips whilst she bathed it with her tears, said in the most soothing tone, "My dearest father, do not thus reflect upon yourself; you, who have ever been so kind, so indulgent;—it wounds me to the very soul!"

Elizabeth, who sat on the other side of her father, said in a voice interrupted with sobs, "Dear, dear papa, I will try to do every thing which you and my sister wish me to do; indeed, indeed I will."

Lionel walked towards the fire, near  
which



which his father was sitting :—“ Among your children, dear sir,” said this affectionate youth, “ but one opinion I am persuaded prevails ; that you have ever been the best, the kindest of parents. May we all unite in endeavouring to perform our duty to God and to you ! Most faithfully do I now promise you, that whilst I have memory, no cares, no pleasures shall ever efface from it this solemn hour, and I trust the impression will have the happiest influence on my future conduct.”

“ God bless you, my son ! God bless you !” was all that Mr. Harwood could reply.

After a short pause, Mr. Markland said : “ It would ill become me, my profession considered, as well as the office I hold in your family, sir, to be silent on a subject of so much import-

ance ; and I candidly confess that I have not directed the attention of my young pupils to it in a manner suited to its high and exalted nature. But from this time we will allot a portion of every day to a study which I am sorry to say I have too much neglected : and I am persuaded my young friends will readily engage to read with me that sacred volume, from which I trust they will derive such instruction as shall properly regulate their conduct here, and ensure to themselves that happiness which it promises hereafter to all those who imbibe its precepts and perform the duties it enjoins."

The boys approached their father, and assured him they would most willingly do every thing which he and Mr. Markland wished. Mr. Harwood warmly applauded their ready acquiescence,

cence and, tenderly assured them of his parental affection.

From the supposition that our readers may take some interest in what further relates to Lord Robert Vere, we shall now devote a few pages to that young nobleman.—The wound which he received from Mr. Villars was entirely healed in the course of a few weeks; but his health not being restored, his physician ordered him to Bristol, where he arrived about the time of Mrs. Villars's death. As he was one morning looking over the papers in the coffee-room, two gentlemen, who had been conversing for some time with much seeming earnestness, drew near the place where Lord Robert was sitting. As they spoke low, he could not distinctly hear all that passed; but what follows

follows was sufficient to arrest his attention.

“What a pity it was!——When I saw her about five years ago, she appeared in my eyes one of the most interesting girls I ever met with.”——

“Where did you become acquainted with her?”——“In her father’s house, where she presided with as much grace and propriety as it was possible for any young woman to do; at least as far as I had an opportunity of judging.”——

——“How long were you there?”——

“About four days: my introduction was from the gentleman and lady with whom I made an excursion to the Lakes: I have very seldom seen her since her marriage; but have frequently heard her spoken of as being greatly admired, though too fond of a dissipated

pated life. When I saw her in Cumberland, she did not appear to have a wish that was not bounded by her native woods and mountains.”—“How long has she been dead?”—“Only a few days.”—“I understand she was necessary to her own dissolution?”—“Not intentionally so : she caught a severe cold by walking in her father’s park, where she was exposed to a heavy shower of rain, and being obliged to continue in her wet clothes until she returned to a cottage in the neighbourhood, where she had taken up her abode, though undiscovered by her friends : the consequence was, the cold she had taken fell upon her lungs, and ended in a rapid consumption.”—“This *may* be the case, certainly ; but I should rather think the story originates with  
the

the family, in order to conceal from the world the real circumstances which were the occasion of her death."

Lord Robert still held the paper in his hand, though he could neither see that nor any other object with distinctness:—a mist obscured his sight, and a cold dew overspread his face.

At this critical juncture the Earl of —— entered the room. The death-like paleness of his son, and the settled sorrow which had taken possession of his features, immediately attracted the notice of Lord ——, who, extremely alarmed, hastily advanced to the place where Lord Robert was sitting, and inquired if he was ill. The sound of the earl's voice had an instantaneous effect on his son, who suddenly rising from his seat, and without speaking,  
rested

rested on the arm of his father, and quitted the room in a state of mind greatly embarrassed and distressed.

The gentlemen who had been engaged in the above conversation were greatly surprised to find that it was Lord Robert Vere who had so abruptly left the room, and immediately concluded that they had been the occasion of the change so visible in his appearance.

From a letter which Lord Robert wrote to his sister some months subsequent to the foregoing circumstance, we shall transcribe the following passage :

“ All invitations of this nature I must entirely decline. The party at the Abbey is too numerous and too gay for me to mix with. You are not aware how greatly I am changed, or you would be more solicitous that I should

should remain in solitude, than return to those scenes for which I am now totally unfit. The recollection of past misfortunes will sometimes assail me so powerfully, that I have no command over myself, except that of instantly flying from society : total seclusion is my only refuge. I should be sorry to wound your affectionate heart by dwelling on the acute sufferings I frequently undergo, before I can reason myself into that frame of mind which it is necessary to acquire in order to rejoin my friends.

“I am sorry, dear Charlotte, to give you this history of myself ; but if the picture is a painful it is also a just one.”

About the time of this letter being written, Sir William and Lady Leslie, their young family, with Miss Reynolds, Mr. Villars, and his children, arrived



arrived at Bristol on their way into Devonshire. It was now that the natural good disposition and good sense which Lady Leslie possessed overcame the bad effects of a faulty and injudicious education. Perhaps nothing less than the precarious state of health experienced by the husband she tenderly loved, and the shock which the misconduct of poor Mrs. Villars had occasioned her, could have produced so total a change as had taken place in the mode of life and sentiments of this lady. With regard to the last-mentioned circumstance, she not only felt most sensibly the affliction and disgrace unavoidably attendant on such an event, but severely reproached herself with having been accessory to its occurrence. With infinite regret she recollected the period when the gay and innocent Sophia was  
by

by her initiated into those scenes, to which had she remained a stranger she would in all probability have remained a stranger to guilt and ignominy.

We shall now conclude this short, but it is hoped not wholly uninteresting story, with the two following letters.

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TO THE LADY TRAVAGER LESLIE.

*Mistel, Oct. 30.*

My dear madam,

WE yesterday reached this place in safety ; and I am happy to inform you that Sir William bore his journey without suffering materially from fatigue. Our good Doctor no sooner heard that we were arrived, than he hastened to bid us welcome, and thinks his patient improved in the course of the last four months : however, he still earnestly recommends

recommends us to spend our winters in Devonshire until every symptom of Sir William's complaint has disappeared. I know, my dear madam, you will rejoice to hear that I think there is every hope of seeing your favourite wish one day accomplished.

My brother confessed to me a few weeks ago, that it was his intention at a proper time to solicit the hand of our incomparable young friend. Whatever her answer might once have been, I think she cannot now, circumstanced as she is, continue inflexible to the entreaties of him who is father to the dear children whom she loves with such an excess of fondness. But on this interesting subject we must for some time be satisfied with forming conjectures only : I sincerely hope the result will prove favourable to our wishes.

Cecilia

Cecilia is come to tell me that my letter will be too late if it is not sent immediately. I must therefore hasten to assure you of our most kind and united remembrances ; also, that in a very few days you shall hear again from,

My dearest madam,

Your truly affectionate

C. LESLIE.

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TO MISS BEAVOR.

*London, Nov. 2.*

ON my return from Guildford yesterday I had the happiness to receive my dear Harriet's letter, which it would be superfluous to say I read with all the delight it was calculated to inspire. Nor will my Harriet peruse with indifference these hasty lines, the chief purport

port of which is to inform her that on Thursday next we commence our journey into Cumberland. How sweet is the conviction, that the pleasure you will derive from this information extends beyond the long-wished-for interview with your aunt and sister, and directs your thoughts to him also whose greatest happiness is that of thinking on you ! I am afraid the ladies will be apt to regard me as an impatient and harassing companion. In every thing that has not a tendency to retard our progress, they shall find me disposed to conform most implicitly to their wishes : but when I consider that my time is limited, and that every moment of delay is a moment stolen from what constitutes my sum of felicity, I cannot avoid fearing that I shall scarcely be able to keep my ardent desire of  
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proceeding with rapidity under due control. I know I shall have a friend and advocate in your sister, yet shall feel very reluctant to trespass on your aunt, who I am sure will be inclined to make for me every reasonable allowance. I must not conclude this letter without informing you that I was yesterday assured by a friend, whose authority I believe to be unquestionable, that my promotion is no longer a matter of doubt, and will be officially announced as soon as the term expires for which I have obtained leave of absence. With what unqualified pleasure should I once have written the above sentence ! Its closing words now draw a sigh from my heart. Teach me, dear Harriet, to subdue every thought, every wish, that militates against the imperious duty I am bound by the most sacred  
ties

ties to fulfil. This is an awful, a momentous and critical period, in which to form attachments so tender, so indissoluble, as mine to you : but the heart will not be dictated to ; its emotions are as involuntary as they are uncontrollable. But what have I said ? Would I, were it in my power, exchange for the liberty I once possessed, an engagement which comprises such a world of happiness as that which is centred in mine to you ? Rather a thousand times would I resign life itself, than relinquish what gives to it its greatest value. Nothing will so powerfully conduce to add firmness to my conduct as the reflection, that a soldier's honour is a gem which, however bright, is easily tarnished ; and that, were mine to be sullied, I should no longer be worthy the regard you have professed for

for me. These persuasive truths will enable me to preserve that energy and laudable ambition which ought to be inseparable from my profession, and destitute of which, that profession would become a burthen : they must shield me from that softness which a heart like mine, overflowing with tenderness, may be too ready to indulge. I know you will encourage and assist me in this arduous yet necessary task. We know not what we can attain, until the mind has full power to expand itself, unenslaved by the fetters of an indolent and supine acquiescence with its favourite wishes and most beloved pursuits. In theory I am laying plans for conducting myself properly, when in actual possession of the delicious pleasures which I shall enjoy in your society when a few more tedious days have elapsed.



elapsed. How far I shall be able to reduce these wise and prudent rules to practice, time must determine. It is my wish neither to be so entirely captivated by the felicity I enjoy as to forget that it *must* be interrupted, nor yet embitter that felicity by giving way to regret and despondency : either extreme it would be judicious to avoid : but whether the calm reflections of the philosopher will overcome the impassioned feelings of the lover, I cannot take upon me to say. I look forward with a mixture of hope and fear ; nor can I contemplate the future, without being elevated or depressed as the state of my mind or the aspect of affairs obtains an ascendancy.

This country has at various times and in many instances experienced the

kind care of a superintending Providence, and may again flourish under its protecting influence. England may yet emerge from the cloud which overshadows her, and by resuming her ancient splendour, dignity and importance, again become the admiration and the envy of less favoured nations. O my beloved Harriet, should this charming vision be indeed realized, how sweet will it be to retire with honour from a station unfavourable to the peace and tranquillity of domestic life, with the delightful consciousness of having in some small degree contributed towards the accomplishment of so blessed an event! To have been even a humble instrument in restoring to our bleeding country those advantages which would lead to a permanent and  
honourable

honourable peace, must leave on the mind impressions beyond the power of time or accident to efface.

This subject has so entirely, yet almost insensibly, engrossed my pen and my thoughts, that I see I have occupied no inconsiderable portion of my second sheet without mentioning a circumstance which it would be unpardonable to omit. I know you will have great pleasure in acquainting our friends that I yesterday received a letter from Mr. Norris, who informs me that William is in perfect health, and pursuing his studies with all possible diligence : if he continues to apply to his books with the same assiduity to the end of the term which has hitherto marked his conduct, I find he will be likely to acquire an additional share of literary fame. Mr. Norris seems to think

William

William has now finally determined on entering into the church, of which I hope he will become a respectable and useful member.

And now, my dearest Harriet, I must bid you an unwilling adieu : this protracted farewell I hope and trust will soon be succeeded by a happy meeting. I shall then have the inexpressible felicity of assuring you in person how inviolably and affectionately I am, and ever must remain, yours entirely,

L. HARWOOD.

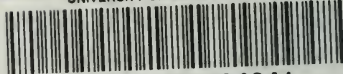
THE END.







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